



AMBASSADE DU GRAND-DUCHÉ
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WASHINGTON

Washington, June 22, 2005

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am very pleased to be here today with Ambassador John Bruton representing the European Commission to discuss the situation in Europe after the votes on the constitution, and the transatlantic relations, after EU/US Summit.

Since the referenda in France, on May 29 and Netherlands, on June 1, the European integration process has known a setback. The failure to reach an agreement on the budget has added to the feeling that Europe is going through a crisis.

Let me assure you, as the Prime Minister of Luxembourg did on Monday, during his joint press conference with President Bush that the European Union is not down on its knees. While we have institutional and budgetary problems, this does not mean that we will become introspective and only concern ourselves with our own domestic problems. The European Union is ready to fully take up its role on the international scene and to make all the necessary decisions internally and externally. The fact that we have postponed the adoption of the constitution doesn't mean that the EU has suddenly stopped working. The existing treaties allow us to work now as before. The EU has major responsibilities in ensuring security and stability on its own continent and in the world.

The Constitutional Treaty is not dead. Last week, at the European Council in Brussels on June 16 and 17, the European leaders reaffirmed its validity. This Treaty is the fruit of a collective process, designed to provide the appropriate response to ensure that an enlarged European Union functions more democratically, more transparently and more effectively. Luxembourg has in fact decided to maintain its own referendum on the constitution and it will be held, as scheduled, on July 10th.

The European leaders noted that to date 10 members states have successfully concluded the Constitutional Treaty. But in two other countries, citizens have expressed a negative vote. While the outcome of these referenda does not call into question citizens' attachment to the European project, Governments must still take into account the concerns and worries that have been expressed. That is why the European leaders have decided that it was necessary to reflect on the situation and allow for more time for the

ratification processes. This period of reflection will be used to enable a broad dialogue and debate to take place in each of our countries, involving citizens, civil society, social partners, national parliaments and political parties. Europe must pay more attention to what its citizens are saying.

How does the situation affect the **enlargement process**? There have been quick calls for a slowdown or even a stop to the enlargement process of the EU. We might need to think about the impact on the European public opinion of last year's big enlargement, when ten new members joined the Union. But we should not underestimate the importance of enlargement as a contribution to peace and prosperity on the European continent. We should respect the commitments made to a number of countries, as the European Council recalled during its meeting last week.

Romania and Bulgaria signed their treaty of accession last April and are trying to fulfil their obligations in order to join the EU by 2007. Accession negotiations with Croatia and Turkey will start once the two countries meet all the requirements. And the Western Balkans countries have the perspective of eventual EU membership.

Progress towards the EU for all the acceding and candidate countries will depend on how and when the countries deliver on their commitments. And we have clear evidence of progress. The best way to reassure the European public is to stick to the conditions for membership and show that future members will not disrupt the Union but reinforce it.

As far as **transatlantic relations** are concerned, the EU/US summit that took place last Monday is the best illustration of our common willingness to work together on the global threats and challenges that we are facing.

President Bush clearly reaffirmed his administration's support for a strong European partner. He said that "the United States continues to support a strong European Union as a partner in spreading freedom and democracy and security and prosperity throughout the world". The President thus confirmed the message that he gave to Europe last February when he paid a first ever visit to the European institutions.

The last EU/ US summit addressed a number of concrete issues on their common strategic agenda: In the Middle East, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, we share the same objectives of promoting democracy and supporting freedom, the rule of law and human rights. With Iraq, we are holding today an international conference, co-hosted by the EU and the US to show international support for Iraqi Transitional Government, its institutions, and the Iraqi people as they take charge of their future.

The EU and the US work together to promote peace, stability, sustainable development, prosperity and good governance in Africa. They will cooperate with the UN, AU and NATO to avert further suffering in Darfur.

The leaders expressed a strong commitment for a reformed United Nations with a balanced and ambitious outcome of the September High Level Meeting.

They will continue strengthen the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime and work in concert to prevent WMD and ballistic missile proliferation. On Iran, the US and EU will maintain their united approach, with the objective of preventing this country from developing nuclear weapons.

On trade and the economy, new initiatives have been launched to remove obstacles to trade and investment between the EU and the US to enhance growth, competitiveness and innovation, increasing integration of the transatlantic market. The leaders expressed continued support for the success of the Doha Development Round and decided to work together on promotion of energy efficiency and energy security including in developing countries. They committed to protect Intellectual Property Rights fighting piracy and counterfeiting both at home and abroad.

They underlined their commitment to increased and more effective development assistance with a view to implementing fully the Millennium Development Goals

The EU-US summit of June 20th confirmed that the transatlantic partnership has been re-launched. We are working together on our transatlantic and global agendas, on the basis of our shared values and shared interests.